

# News

United States  
Department  
of Labor



Bureau of Labor Statistics

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PLS – 3928

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THIS RELEASE IS EMBARGOED  
UNTIL 8:30 A.M. (EST)  
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2003

## **PITTSBURGH CONSUMER PRICE INDEX: LOCAL PRICES UP 1.4 PERCENT OVER-THE-YEAR**

Retail prices in the Pittsburgh area, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U), rose 1.4 percent since the second half of 2001, the United States Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics reported today. Sheila Watkins, the Bureau's regional commissioner, noted that higher prices for housing and other goods and services were mainly responsible for the increase. Six of the eight major components of the Pittsburgh CPI-U had over-the-year increases in the second half of 2002. (See table 1.)

The housing index rose 1.5 percent, as two of the three main components of the category had higher prices; shelter and household furnishings and operations had over-the-year increases of 3.7 and 0.4 percent, respectively. Fuels and utilities, the third component of housing, fell 5.1 percent, due in large part to lower electricity and natural gas prices. The housing index accounted for over one-third of the over-the-year increase in the CPI-U.

The other goods and services index, which includes tobacco and smoking products, personal care products and services, and personal services such as legal, funeral, and laundry and dry cleaning services, rose 7.8 percent over the last twelve months—the largest increase of all the major categories—and was responsible for nearly one quarter of the over-the-year increase in the CPI-U.

Medical care costs were up 4.5 percent over the year, and the education and communication index increased 5.2 percent since last January. These two categories each accounted for almost one-fifth of the over-the-year increase in the CPI-U.

Food and beverages prices increased 1.1 percent since the second half of 2001, due in large part to higher prices for food away from home, which rose 2.2 percent. Also contributing to the rise were a 1.9 percent increase in alcoholic beverages and a 0.2 percent increase in food at home prices. The recreation index rose 1.1 percent from last year.

The two remaining major categories had lower prices since the second half of 2001. Despite a 7.7 percent rise in gasoline prices, the transportation index decreased 1.0 percent over the year. Private transportation, which includes the cost of vehicles and motor fuels, was down 0.9 percent since last January. Apparel prices fell 1.7 percent over the year.

The energy index, which reflects pricing for gasoline and household fuels, fell 2.7 percent over the last twelve months, as higher gasoline prices were more than offset by lower electricity and natural gas prices.

The CPI-U for the Pittsburgh area stood at 175.0 on the 1982-84=100 reference base, which means that a market basket of goods and services which averaged \$100.00 in the 1982-84 period would have cost \$175.00 in the second half of 2002. The Pittsburgh area includes Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Fayette, Washington, and Westmoreland Counties.

Local area indexes are by-products of the national CPI program. Because each local index is a small subset of the national index, it has a smaller sample size and is therefore subject to substantially more sampling and other measurement error than the national index. As a result, area indexes show greater volatility than the national index, although their long-term trends are quite similar. Short-term changes in local indexes may reflect strictly seasonal influences.

Table 1. Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): Indexes for semiannual averages and percent changes for selected periods, Pittsburgh, PA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Semiannual average indexes			Percent change to	
	2nd half 2001	1st half 2002	2nd half 2002	2nd half 2001	1st half 2002
All items .....	172.5	172.9	175.0	1.4	1.2
All items (1967=100) .....	526.4	527.6	534.0	-	-
Food and beverages .....	167.0	168.6	168.9	1.1	.2
Food .....	165.6	167.1	167.5	1.1	.2
Food at home .....	165.2	165.8	165.6	.2	-.1
Food away from home .....	167.4	169.6	171.0	2.2	.8
Alcoholic beverages .....	184.0	186.8	187.5	1.9	.4
Housing .....	172.3	172.4	174.8	1.5	1.4
Shelter .....	189.5	193.3	196.6	3.7	1.7
Rent of primary residence .....	166.5	169.7	171.7	3.1	1.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1) .....	188.1	194.0	196.3	4.4	1.2
Fuels and utilities .....	165.9	154.0	157.4	-5.1	2.2
Fuels .....	163.3	146.2	148.3	-9.2	1.4
Gas (piped) and electricity .....	166.2	148.4	150.0	-9.7	1.1
Electricity .....	144.4	135.8	127.5	-11.7	-6.1
Utility natural gas service .....	189.1	162.8	177.0	-6.4	8.7
Household furnishings and operations .....	134.9	135.0	135.4	.4	.3
Apparel .....	154.3	151.7	151.7	-1.7	.0
Transportation .....	139.3	136.9	137.9	-1.0	.7
Private transportation .....	138.2	135.7	136.9	-.9	.9
Motor fuel .....	109.1	107.3	117.4	7.6	9.4
Gasoline (all types) .....	109.2	107.5	117.6	7.7	9.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular (2) .....	106.7	105.1	115.4	8.2	9.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (2) (3) .....	118.2	116.2	126.5	7.0	8.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium (2) .....	110.1	107.6	117.1	6.4	8.8
Medical care .....	257.3	262.3	269.0	4.5	2.6
Recreation (4) .....	102.9	104.6	104.0	1.1	-.6
Education and communication (4) .....	111.3	113.0	117.1	5.2	3.6
Other goods and services .....	268.3	277.1	289.3	7.8	4.4
Commodity and service group					
Commodities .....	153.7	153.0	154.5	.5	1.0
Commodities less food and beverages .....	145.2	143.2	145.3	.1	1.5
Nondurables less food and beverages .....	156.1	155.7	160.2	2.6	2.9
Durables .....	131.4	128.1	127.6	-2.9	-.4
Services .....	193.4	194.9	197.6	2.2	1.4
Special aggregate indexes					
All items less medical care .....	167.7	167.9	169.8	1.3	1.1
All items less shelter .....	168.0	167.5	169.3	.8	1.1
Commodities less food .....	146.8	145.0	147.0	.1	1.4
Nondurables .....	162.0	162.6	165.0	1.9	1.5
Nondurables less food .....	158.0	157.7	162.0	2.5	2.7
Services less rent of shelter (1) .....	202.6	202.3	204.9	1.1	1.3
Services less medical care services .....	188.2	189.5	191.9	2.0	1.3
Energy .....	139.8	130.1	136.0	-2.7	4.5
All items less energy .....	177.3	178.8	180.4	1.7	.9
All items less food and energy .....	180.6	182.1	184.0	1.9	1.0

1 Index is on a December 1982=100 base.

2 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

3 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

4 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.

Table 2. Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W):Indexes for semiannual averages and percent changes for selected periods, Pittsburgh, PA (1982-84=100 unless otherwise noted)

Expenditure category	Semiannual average indexes			Percent change to	
	2nd half 2001	1st half 2002	2nd half 2002	2nd half 2001	1st half 2002
All items .....	165.6	165.6	167.7	1.3	1.3
All items (1967=100) .....	492.6	492.5	498.8	-	-
Food and beverages .....	167.0	168.6	169.0	1.2	.2
Food .....	165.1	166.5	166.9	1.1	.2
Food at home .....	164.1	165.1	165.1	.6	.0
Food away from home .....	168.6	169.9	171.6	1.8	1.0
Alcoholic beverages .....	187.5	191.7	192.9	2.9	.6
Housing .....	158.4	158.5	160.7	1.5	1.4
Shelter .....	166.8	170.3	172.7	3.5	1.4
Rent of primary residence .....	166.5	169.7	171.7	3.1	1.2
Owners' equivalent rent of primary residence (1).....	174.8	180.2	182.4	4.3	1.2
Fuels and utilities .....	164.4	153.1	156.9	-4.6	2.5
Fuels .....	160.2	144.2	146.8	-8.4	1.8
Gas (piped) and electricity .....	165.7	148.7	150.5	-9.2	1.2
Electricity .....	144.4	135.8	127.5	-11.7	-6.1
Utility natural gas service .....	189.1	162.8	177.0	-6.4	8.7
Household furnishings and operations .....	129.9	129.5	130.0	.1	.4
Apparel .....	155.9	154.6	154.3	-1.0	-.2
Transportation .....	140.5	136.5	137.8	-1.9	1.0
Private transportation .....	140.8	136.7	138.1	-1.9	1.0
Motor fuel .....	109.1	107.3	117.4	7.6	9.4
Gasoline (all types) .....	109.2	107.5	117.6	7.7	9.4
Gasoline, unleaded regular (2).....	106.7	105.1	115.4	8.2	9.8
Gasoline, unleaded midgrade (2) (3)....	118.2	116.2	126.5	7.0	8.9
Gasoline, unleaded premium (2).....	110.1	107.6	117.1	6.4	8.8
Medical care .....	247.3	252.1	257.9	4.3	2.3
Recreation (4).....	101.4	102.8	101.8	.4	-1.0
Education and communication (4).....	109.9	111.1	115.3	4.9	3.8
Other goods and services .....	284.1	294.4	314.3	10.6	6.8
Commodity and service group					
Commodities .....	152.3	150.9	152.7	.3	1.2
Commodities less food and beverages .....	142.5	139.4	141.9	-.4	1.8
Nondurables less food and beverages .....	155.6	155.3	160.6	3.2	3.4
Durables .....	124.7	120.9	120.5	-3.4	-.3
Services .....	181.9	183.4	186.0	2.3	1.4
Special aggregate indexes					
All items less medical care .....	162.4	162.3	164.3	1.2	1.2
All items less shelter .....	165.8	164.6	166.7	.5	1.3
Commodities less food .....	144.6	141.7	144.1	-.3	1.7
Nondurables .....	162.0	162.3	165.1	1.9	1.7
Nondurables less food .....	158.0	157.8	162.9	3.1	3.2
Services less rent of shelter (1).....	174.4	173.9	176.3	1.1	1.4
Services less medical care services .....	178.2	179.6	182.0	2.1	1.3
Energy .....	133.4	124.3	130.4	-2.2	4.9
All items less energy .....	170.4	171.6	173.2	1.6	.9
All items less food and energy .....	171.8	172.9	174.8	1.7	1.1

1 Index is on a December 1984=100 base.

2 Special index based on a substantially smaller sample.

3 Indexes on a December 1993=100 base.

4 Indexes on a December 1997=100 base.

- Data not available.

NOTE: Index applies to a month as a whole, not to any specific date.